



**Price of a barrel
of petroleum
today:
US\$ 47.07**

The leader and his flag



By: **Roland W. Peterson**

The caravan is moving
The wind is blowing
The sun is hot
The sky is blue
The horns are blowing
The crowd is shouting

The caravan stops
The crowd is mad
and frustrated
They are speaking
out in anger

Suddenly a shot rings out
A silence falls
The earth trembles
The boulders crack in pain
The wind stops blowing
The sky turns dark

In the middle of this all
He lies on the ground
The leader is down
In the fight for
freedom he falls

When I fall take up the
flag and move on
There is a burning in his
heart
And a will to go on
He is not letting his flag go

Today he is still holding
the flag
The will to go forward
lives on.

Most stores closed tomorrow

March 18th is Aruba's National Anthem & Flag Day

Celebration at Paseo Herencia starts at 5 p.m.



Aruba celebrates its National Anthem and Flag Day tomorrow with a grand performance in Plaza Betico Croes in Oranjestad. On this official holiday, patriotic sporting events and games also take place in towns all over the island.

On 18th March 1948, during a Netherlands-Surinam-Curaçao conference in the Hague, the seeds of independence and a National Day for Aruba were sown by then Aruban leader Shon A. Eman who presented a petition signed by more than 2000 Arubans in favor of independence.

Almost thirty years later during a parliamentary session on 16th March 1976, it was agreed that March 18th would be Aruba's National Day - the day to celebrate Aruba's national anthem and flag and this was celebrated for the first time in 1976.

Exactly 10 years later, in 1986, also on this important date, Aruba celebrated the achievement by Betico Croes of a dream that had been three generations in the making - Status Aparte - an autonomous status within the kingdom of the Netherlands. On this date in 1996, a monument was inaugurated in remembrance of the 2,147 people who, back in 1947 and 1948 had signed a petition in favor of Status Aparte.


Aruba's National anthem, "Aruba Dushi Tera" is a waltz composed by Juan Chabaya 'Padu' Lampe (lyrics) and Rufo Wever (music). The Aruba flag has four colors: Bunting yellow, Larkspur (or U.N.) Blue, Union Jack Red and White. The flag of Aruba consists of a red star with a white outline set against a sea-blue background with two parallel yellow stripes.

The STAR symbolizes the four points of the compass, denoting the varied source of more than 40 nationalities living on Aruba. Each of these colors is significant: the RED color of the star symbolizes love of country and the WHITE outline surrounding it represents the white sandy beaches around Aruba as well as the purity of Aruba's inhabitants who respect justice, freedom and righteousness. The BLUE color of the flag denotes the color of the surrounding sea.

The two yellow STRIPES on the flag denote the free position of Aruba with respect to The Netherlands and other islands while maintaining closeness with them.

The YELLOW color is used to symbolize abundance - as evidenced by the sources of economic and industrial prosperity, representing the island's past and present industries of gold, aloe, tourism, the oil refinery and so forth. □





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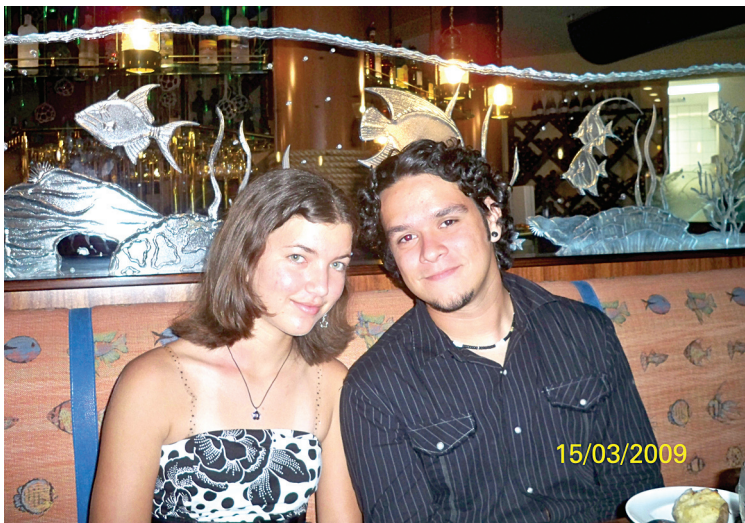
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Natasha de Canha celebrates birthday at Moby Dick's



PASEO HERENCIA – On Sunday evening, Moby Dick's Seafood Restaurant welcomed the birthday girl Natasha de Canha. She was joined by her family, Rhonda de Canha (Mom), Jose de Canha (Dad), Lawyer Fred Baptist (Grandpa) and Anna Baptist (Grandma).

They chose Moby Dick's to celebrate for the great ambience and unique atmosphere to top off the best seafood and deserts on the island. □



MARCH 18TH DIA DI HIMNO Y BANDERA SPECIAL

best in steak and fish
on the island



FLAG DAY
MENU
us\$39

APPETIZER
...Greens and croutons...
MAIN COURSE
...Grouper and lobster...
DESSERT
...Cheese cake and fruits...

FLAG DAY
MENU
us\$49

APPETIZER
...Tuna and crab...
MAIN COURSE
...U.S. Black Angus
Tenderloin...
DESSERT
...Chocolate and fruits...



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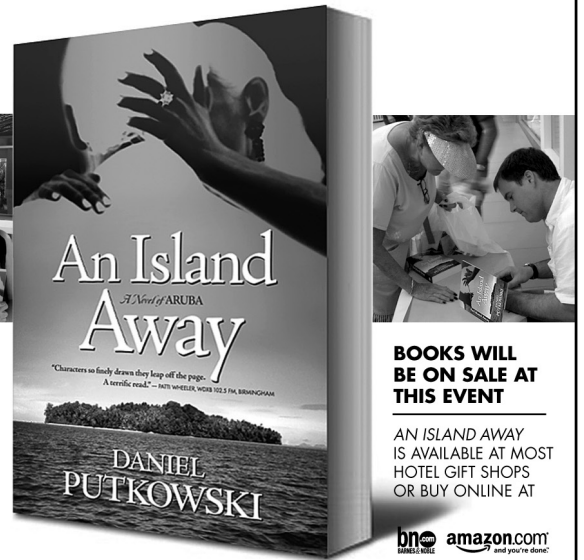
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Coin display at the Numismatic Museum



ORANJESTAD – On Wednesday, March 18th, the Numismatic Museum will be open from 10 am to 4 pm with a unique display of Aruba-Antillias coins with other coins from all over the world. The Numismatic Museum

is located on Weststraat just behind the Bus Station next to the Royal Plaza Mall. On November 24th of 1955, on his 36th birthday, Mario Odor was digging in his flower garden when he found two old coins. One of them was a one



penny of 1790 and one half-penny of 1788, both of them were "Tradesmen" copper Irish tokens. These coins circulated in this region in a time when colonists, traders, merchants and even pirates traveled these Caribbean seas. These two coins he found sparked Mario's idea of starting to collect coins and paper money. <http://www.museumaruba.org/pix/building1lg.jpg>



The Aruba Numismatic Museum was established on November 13, 1981 and lodges the private collection of Mr. Odor and is the first Numismatic museum established on Aruba. The museum contains over 40.000 different pieces covering over 400 countries. This fantastic collection

contains approximately over 110 different collection on their own, for example: primitive, strange, zoo, proof, counter stamp, over struck, mini, chop-coins, errors, leprosarium, gold, ration, F.A.O. dollars & crowns, commemoratives, center holed, scalloped, square, wooden-coins, tokens, medals, food-coupons en much more. □



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OUTSTANDING MVCI associates rewarded with 'GOVETS' awards



ORANJESTAD—The excellent work of Marriott Vacation Club International (MVCI) associates can be appreciated in the first-rate reputation Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club and Marriott's Aruba Surf Club share as outstanding vacation ownership properties. Well-deserved recognition was

recently given to associates in the form of "GOVETS" awards (with each letter representing an area in which associates have surpassed expectations) as well as other individual honors for overall job performance noted for the quarter as well as for throughout the year.

Outstanding associates in the Sales & Marketing Department were exemplified in the year's best 'GOVETS' winners. For her talent in exceeding expectations in Guest service, Maura de Cuba received high praise. For his prompt response in Owner service, Francis Groeneveldt was a stand-out

once again. Yeni Conde was recognized for her impressive totals in Volume. In meeting Expense goals, Arlinda Marin was acknowledged for her cost-effective strategies. For his smarts in pursuing a common purpose through Teamwork, Roland Navas was honored. Last, but certainly

not least, Mariska Bernabela proved a role model for what can be accomplished through Self-Development. Preceding the annual awards were the quarter's stand-outs with excellence demonstrated in the individual categories of Guest service: Erick Andrews; Owner service: Christal Ross;

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Volume: Carlos Ramos; Expense Goals: Nancy Perez; Teamwork: Roland Navas; and Self-Development: Jay-Ann Werleman.

Those individuals who excelled overall in each facet of their position were similarly honored. Supervisor of the Last Quarter went to Edwina Gario, with Supervisor of the Year accolades going to Leo Celaire. By demonstrating excellent aptitude as well as potential were the Associate of the Quarter Zubaidah Ibrahim and Associate of the Year Jenny Boekhoudt. In recognizing their ability as well as their leadership skills, the Manager of the Quarter went to Carina Kelly, with the ultimate honor of Manager of the Year going to Natasia Dragt.

A number of Year-end and GOVETS award winners are repeat winners, with consistency in the quality of their work playing a key role in their success with MVCI. Familiar names to the line-up of past award winners include Senior Administration Manager Miriam Maduro and Sales Executive Thanya Croes, who returned to the winners circle recently in being honored for their 10-year long careers with the Sales & Marketing Department. Both Miriam and Thanya are popular among their fellow associates, having served both as role models as well as friends to their co-workers during their many years of service.

With so many motivated and talented associates, MVCI's Sales & Marketing Department continues to excel by demonstrating real results at the resort. Aruba's team remains one of the highest rated departments within the entire Marriott Vacation Club International (MVCI) network. More information about MVCI is obtainable by calling Tel: 586-2641 or visiting the website: www.vacationclub.com or www.marriottsarubasurfclub.com



Seaport Casino
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FLAG DAY

Slot Tournament



WEDNESDAY
March 18th, 2009
From 8pm - 11pm

Don't miss Seaport Casino's **Anthem & Flag Day Slot Tournament!!** Pleasure and excitement combined with the opportunity to WIN a total of Afl. 1000,- in prizes. Drinks and snacks are on the house with tons of fun during the tournament

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Afl. 10,-

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Limited participation, so please register on time!

For more information, please call 523-6318 or 523-6437.

Aquarius Restaurant Salutes Aruba's National Day



ORANJESTAD – Aruba's Nation Day, May 18th is upcoming, and in honor of the important island holiday Aquarius Restaurant at the Renaissance Mall is offering a special designed to please locals and visiting seafood lovers.

The restaurant's famed buffet dinner on March 18th, will toast to Aruba's bounty of the sea with a sumptuous seafood spread and live seafood action-stations.

The menu, already familiar to many repeat patrons includes a Seafood Bar featuring

Maine Lobster chicks with mustard mayonnaise, Steamed Caribbean peel'n'eat shrimp, King Crab Legs, Coconut Seafood Ceviche flavored with Cilantro, Hot Smoked Tuna served Sushi style, assorted Maki Sushi Rolls with seafood and vegetables and a Dutch delight in commemoration of the island's heritage, a Boucan fish board with smoked Mackerel, Herring, Eel and Mussels.

The Seafood Dinner Buffet also offers a rich Salad & Soup display with seasonal greens and a raw bar loaded with assorted dressings and condiments besides just-made Criollo Potato Salad, Marinated Ripe Tomatoes, Conch Salad, Peppered Bean Salad, Hearts of Palm, Surimi Crab Salad, Caribbean



Paseo Herencia
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Wednesday March 18th Celebrating Aruba's Flag and Anthem Day

Musical entertainment by: "Tipico Los Amigos",
"Nos Cultura" dance group & "Grupo di Betico"

Show starts at 5:00pm on main stage

Flag and Anthem Day Specials:

<p>Specia: Aruba Flag & Anthem Day cocktail: \$3 Free dessert with main course</p>	<p>10% discount and 1 FREE ticket to Morgan Island</p>	<p>\$3,- Bar Happy Hour plus FREE Blooming onion with main course on side walk terrace 5pm - 7:30pm</p>	<p>Aruba Ariba! "Come celebrate Aruba's Day at Iguana Cantina" and Receive one free "Aruba Ariba" cocktail with your main course, Kids receive a virgin "Aruba Ariba"</p>
<p>Special 3 course Menu \$29.95</p>	<p>One Free topping per person</p>	<p>Special 3 course Menu \$24.95</p>	

Parking available in Paseo Parking Garage at Afl. 1.00 per hour
J.E. Yrausquin Blvd. 382-A (Situated across the Holiday Inn) Tel: 586-6533.
Walking distance from the High Rise hotels

Seafood Salad, Marinated Feta with herbs, Pasta Pesto Salad, Apple Coleslaw & Creole Ratatouille. Known for their creative soup kettle the chefs of Aquarius restaurant are inspired to simmer a different Caribbean Soup, every day. For main courses the chefs also compose a fresh selection each day brimming with beef, poultry, fish and pasta accompanied by vegetables, starches and rice, which complement the interactive Cooking Station, sautéing Grouper, Snapper, Wahoo, Mahi Mahi, Tuna, Scallops and Shrimp, a la minute, with patrons' input and inspiration. For those with healthy appetites, the Carving Station is ready to delight with Jamaican Roast Striploin topped by horseradish and Dijon mustard, in addition to Glazed Ham & Roast Turkey, but most diners head straight for the dessert extravaganza, indulging in the pastry chef's daily specialties, while they still have room . . .

We are hereby warning you, Chef Christian Rast makes signature Coconut Thyme Flan, Piña Colada Cake, Chocolate Cheesecake, White and Dark Chocolate Mouse, Coconut Cocada, and assorted melt-in-your-mouth cookies like no other chef on the island, you will be breaking your diet on Aruba's national day.

Kids under 5, accompanied by a paying adult, eat free of charge, and kids under 12, accompanied by a paying adult also pay a discounted price, explains Rebecca Verschoor Marval, Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino Marketing Communications & PR Manager. An invitation is hereby extended to both locals and Aruba visitors, to come celebrate a culinary feast at Aquarius Restaurant. □





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With Red Sail Sports Aruba Sunset Sailing along Aruba's scenic Coastline

PALM BEACH – Red Sail Sports is excited to let everyone know about its Catamaran Sailing program. A perfect combination of romance and relaxation, the moonlight sail along the scenic Aruban coastline offers food, drinks, music and more. Nibble on tantalizing snacks while you sit back and enjoy the sounds of live Caribbean music. The open bar offers a variety of tropical cocktails, including some Aruban specialties – be sure to ask the friendly crew for a Captain's Special! Aruba's trade winds provide the ideal conditions for sailing all day long aboard Red Sail Sports top quality, well maintained catamarans. If a sunset sail is a little late for the kids, you can set sail on Red Sail Sports' fun-filled Luncheon or Afternoon Snorkel Trips. The Snorkel Sails are safe for kids of all ages and brings



guests to all the best snorkeling spots in Aruba, including Aruba's most famous snorkel spot – the wreck of the Antilla where you can see yellowtail snapper, angelfish, blue head wrasse and dozens of other tropical fish. Red Sail Sports also offers a Sunset Sail where you can relax with a cocktail and enjoy the spectacular Aruban sunset. A Sunset Sail is truly the best way to watch the sun go down on your Caribbean holiday. **To make reservations or for more information call Red Sail Sports at 586-1603, visit your hotel concierge or your Red Sail Sports representative at the Hyatt, Allegro, Marriott and Renaissance Resorts.**

This Wednesday Only Flag & Anthem Special 3 Course Menu \$24.95

Lunch & Dinner at Moby Dick's

For a great and unique lunch experience, you definitely have to go to Moby Dick's Seafood Restaurant. This is the only place on the island to savor the legendary Bloody Oyster - the ultimate delicacy only known by deep sea connoisseurs who take pleasure in its delight on Sunday mornings. No need to wait for Sunday for this deep sea concoction of Fresh Oysters, Cooked Shrimp, Cold Vodka, Tomato Juice, Tabasco, Lime Juice, Black Pepper and Celery. Moby Dick's weekly lunch specials

include the Famed Fish & Chips (Beer battered grouper fillet with malt vinegar & chips for only \$11.95.) The Amazing Angus Wrap and other Memorable Sandwiches are absolutely delicious just as their dearly loved desserts. The inconceivable cocktails are even more reasons to visit this great place. A must visit lunch appointment for great value, amazing décor, picture perfect outdoor terrace, across the street from the High-Rise hotels at the popular Paseo Herencia Mall.



Casa Tua makes the perfect Pizza

A recipe perfected over thirty years

Casa Tua draws a crowd of local and not-so-local folks who can't seem to get enough of the pizza and the place. There's almost always a wait here, even if you have reservations, so place yourself at the bar with the smell of brick oven pizzas wafting to other tables, and knowing that at some point, that bliss will be yours. Al fresco dining is designed with a chicly rustic feel. The atmosphere is cool and relaxed, "Casa Tua" meaning "Your Home" in Italian. With a Sicilian-style thin crust, dripping with cheese and fresh-made tomato sauce, this pizza comes with a variety of toppings in the meat and veggie categories. Pasta dishes, full Italian meals like Lasagne and veal Osso Buco, fresh salads and rich desserts are also on the menu.



Casa Tua's famous secret thin crust recipe was handed down by an Italian chef, known locally as "the pizza master", in the French student city of Montpellier in 1969. This recipe has been perfected over the years to such a point where Casa Tua is known on the island these days for the best pizza. Period.

*Casa Tua Palm Beach open from 5pm to 11pm.
 Casa Tua Downtown open from 11am to 11pm, on Sunday from 5pm to 11pm.*

**For more information or reservations
 Palm Beach: 586 8470
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Enjoy wonderful cuisine as you dine in this unique American steakhouse with a Caribbean flair. Two diverse culinary worlds are offered: exotic Caribbean food and cowboy-size servings of USDA-certified Black Angus Beef. **Special offer:** Pay just 1/2 price for the first bottle of wine any Tuesday from 6-7:30p.m., with a three-course dinner, two persons minimum.



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An epicurean delight located in a romantic setting on a sugary sand beach with a golden glow of a sunset as a backdrop.



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We offer you a wide assortment of fresh catches of the day, home made salads, fish soup, Aruban specialties and more.

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Sunset Grille, a prime Steakhouse also offering Spa Cuisine



PALM BEACH – The Sunset Grille at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa needs no introduction. The award winning American steakhouse with its chic, cosmopolitan atmosphere headlines Prime Beef, the highest grade U.S.D.A -- only 2% of all beef is graded prime, required to age a minimum of 4 weeks. While steaks and chops make up the heart of the menu, the resort's Executive Chef Matt Boland and restaurant Chef Maarten Smeets innovated

unparalleled appetizers and extraordinary desserts, which helped the Sunset Grille achieve the Triple AAA's elite four-diamond status – a rare feat for steakhouses. Sunset Grille well-known as the number one steakhouse in Aruba offers also spa cuisine, for the health conscious visitors, featuring appetizers, salads and a wide array of seafood selections. The spa cuisine dishes are balanced by enhancing flavors with citrus, spice and

herbs and taste is elevated by marinating, smoking and grilling, Smeets explains. "We now use many more herbs, vegetables, grains and fibers," adds Boland, "all designed to sustain a healthier life style; and we stay away from saturated fats and refined sugars, as well as use salt sparingly," he informs. "The Sunset Grille kitchen," Boland reveals, "uses no trans fats, and our guests," he banter, "stay healthy, wealthy and wise with our new and exciting spa cuisine." Among the patrons favorite dishes are, the Sunset Grille's famous Chop House Martini Salad, "Shaken not Stirred;" the lobster bisque with a pastry crust, the various cuts of prime beef, the popular Rack of Lamb, Stuffed Quail and the delicious Veal Oscar. The spa cuisine features items such as Tuna Tataki, the Spinach Salad, Chilean Seabass, grilled Swordfish and the Asian style Salmon and Scallops served with the



popular Soba Noodles. The Sunset Grille always endeavors to exceed guests' expectations by purchasing the very best products available and preparing them in accordance with a combination of "tried and true" as well as cutting edge contemporary methods, Boland explains. Simply put, the Sunset Grille culinary team buys the best products, and cooks them the best way they know, refusing to cut corners, especially when it comes to buying, aging and



cutting meat. No wonder the readers of Caribbean Travel & Life named it the top restaurant in the Caribbean. □

Stop at the Juggling Fish, Playa Linda Beach Resort before you hit the beach



Palm Beach – From sexy to conservative, you will find bathing suits in all styles and colors at the very cute Juggling Fish Boutique on the seaside boardwalk at Playa

Linda Beach Resort. Any Aruba vacation is a beach-holiday and many island visitors join the locals where the surf meets the sand, enjoying a fresh combination



of sun & sea for a week. Not before buying a new bathing suit. Which is often a daunting task. Not at the Juggling Fish. There, it is bathing suit shopping made easy! You will find an extensive collection of swim wear at the Juggling Fish, which is open daily from 9 a.m. to 7 a.m., and on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., to accommodate busy schedules. You will find bathing suits for the entire family including babies, boys, girls, teenagers, young adults, moms and dads; even grandpas and grandmas are guaranteed to find some fetching pairs of swim trunks,



or two-piece tankinis. And the bikini bathing suits are mix and match, tops and bottoms sold separately, for a perfect fit. Beach sandals, beach bags, towels and accessories,

anything beach related is available at the trendy store. Tel: +297 586 7948. Got a question or a special request? Email: orders@salamanderholdings.com □



End profit tax for saving and credit co-ops in Parliament

WILLEMSTAD--Removal of profit tax paid by savings and credit cooperatives in the Netherlands Antilles will be examined by Parliament in a Central Committee meeting Thursday at 9:00am.

A regulation from circa 1940 levied profit tax on these cooperatives, but now all parties represented in Parliament believe that these can no longer be considered "purely commercial or financial institutions" and are in agreement for the tax to be rescinded, Parliament President Pedro Atacho told the press in St. Maarten.

When discussions are completed in the central committee, the amendment to the Profit Tax Law to remove tax levy will be tabled in Parliament for a vote in the coming weeks. "Members of Parliament consider these cooperatives as institutions to fortify the social situation of their constituents."

An amendment to the accountability law that will give parliament more independence will also be handled on Thursday. This will give parliament direct access to its money without having to go through the Minister of Finance. This provision is also proposed for the General Audit Chamber.

"This proposal will allow parliament to function more effectively as a controlling and co-legislative body and will establish the separation of power between legislative and executive powers," Atacho explained.

An amendment to the Regulation of Order of Parliament will also be handled by parliament. "This will enable the committee of parliament to function more effectively and emphasis the independence of the parliament in our democratic system."

He added that these efforts

will benefit the functioning of the parliaments of country Curaçao and country St. Maarten in the future.

Parliament's agenda this week also comprises the continuation of several adjourned Central Committee and general sessions.

The apprehension of a parliamentarian and other people on December 15 during the Roundtable Conference in Curaçao will further be discussed by parliament on

Tuesday at 9:30am in the continuation of an adjourned public meeting of January 13. Justice Minister David Dick informed Atacho that the investigation by the Public Prosecutor's Office has been finished and he is ready to answer questions posed by parliamentarians.

Also on the agenda is the ratification of five law proposals for the cancellation of debt to the Netherlands Antilles and the island

territories individually and the amendment dealing with the bankruptcy of Bonaire's Parker Hotel. The settlement of US \$20.4 million between Netherlands Antilles and the company SACE has already been executed between 2000 and 2004.

The adjourned meeting of March 3 on the latest developments at University of the Netherlands Antilles will continue on Tuesday. Fact finding committee head

Herman George has completed his report into the protest by students. Armed with this report, Education Minister Omayra Leeflang will answer parliament's questions.

The Committee of Kingdom Affairs meets on Wednesday to finalize preparations for Tri-Partite meetings of the Antilles, Aruba and Suriname in St. Maarten in the week of March 23. The regular parliamentary meeting will also be held here. □



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Little Island Offers a Big Bailout

Curaçao, Often Called the Caribbean's Hidden Treasure, Offers U.S. Travelers Free Trips to the Island Every Day for 70 Days and the Chance to Win a Half Million Dollars! WILLEMSTAD, Curaçao-Understanding that travel has become more difficult for U.S. travelers in this tough economy, Curaçao is putting "vacations" back into reach. The island launched its high profile awareness building campaign on March 16th via the dedicated website, www.curacaotreasure.com. U.S. consumers who visit the site

will have the chance to learn more about Curaçao and all its hidden treasures and have the opportunity to enter to win one of 70 trips to be awarded daily. Anyone who registers on the site may ultimately be one of only ten finalists chosen to participate in an on-island Treasure Hunt in August 2009 with a grand prize of a half million dollars! "In these tough economic times, the island of Curaçao is actually doing well," says Brenda Benjamin, Director of Marketing, at the Curaçao Tourist Board. "The Hidden

Treasure Campaign is our little island's way of providing a big bailout for U.S. travelers. It is also our strategy to build awareness of Curaçao in the marketplace and make the island more accessible to Americans – we could not be hitting the market with this campaign at a better time." The Curaçao on-Island Treasure Hunt will be a comprehensive island-wide event that will allow Curaçao to showcase its many hidden treasures to the international community expected to be on-hand for the Hunt. Visitors

will have the opportunity to experience first hand the island's many "treasures" at several significant locations. "At a time when there is so much grim news everywhere, the Curaçao Treasure Hunt is a fun event that will prove lucrative to one lucky winner and will put Curaçao front-of-mind and tip-of-tongue with travelers and the media," notes Benjamin. "This is a great way for American travelers to become more familiar with Curaçao, often referred to as the Caribbean's hidden treasure because of our exquisite beaches, remarkable history and our capital Willemstad's distinction as a UNESCO World Heritage site."

The Curaçao Treasure Hunt will be supported by a print, online and television ad campaign that hits this month. To learn more, visit www.curacaotreasure.com. About Curaçao With its pristine dive sites, secluded beaches, championship golf course and rich local cuisine, Curaçao offers a little something for everyone – from the adventure traveler to those who simply want to unwind (and enjoy its perfect climate). Curaçao boasts an eclectic mix of history, culture and heritage welcoming visitors to this unique island paradise. For more information about Curaçao call 1-800-3-CURACAO (1-800-328-7222), or visit www.Curacao.com. □

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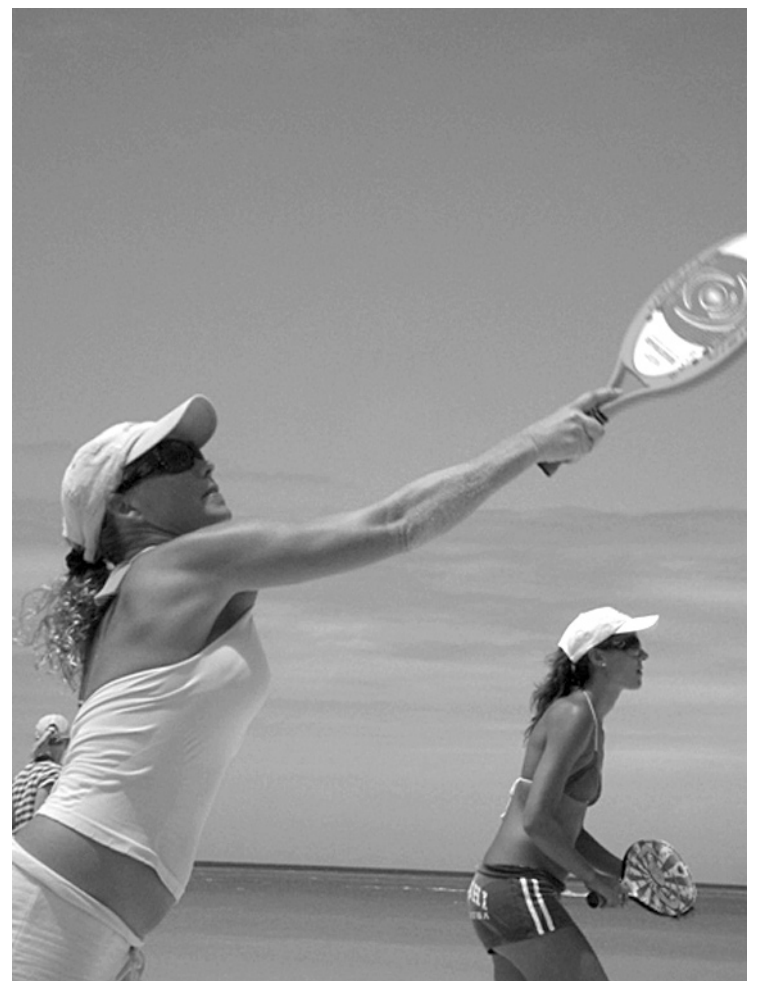
Adrenalin rush during fantastic day of Beach Tennis Competition



EAGLE BEACH - The third Beach Tennis Competition went underway last Sunday underneath a dark, cloudy sky, but as the day progressed the sun came out strong and fierce. Sunglasses, caps and visors worked overtime as did the leg muscles in the soft sand of the beach next to the Costa Linda Resort. There were excellent matches in all categories and the adrenalin rush could be felt on all eight courts. Once again it was a fantastic day of Beach Tennis for spectators and players alike.

The results were:

1st place Fun 1st place Men Bob/Koen Eskens
 2nd place Martin de Vries Benjamin Kok
 Fun Ladies 1st place Sylvia Wolters Virginia Velasquez
 2nd place Monique Bouwer Saskia Lanting
 Intermediate Men 1st place Frank Bax Rick/
 2nd place Frank Duin Jasper Brouwer
 Advanced Men 1st place Patrick Hernandez Dennis Martinez
 2nd place Patrick



2nd place Dennis Schoneveld Jock Schut
 Advanced Ladies 1st place Wendy v. Wanten Tessel
 Huizinga
 2nd place Arlette Schut Manon van Zwieten
 Pro Men 1st place Cado/Alan baay

Sponsors of this fun day were Alno Kitchen, Amstel Bright, Inter Assure and Aruba Aloe. The next day of the monthly Beach Tennis Competition is on April 5. □

“The Hart family together with Betty” at Matilde

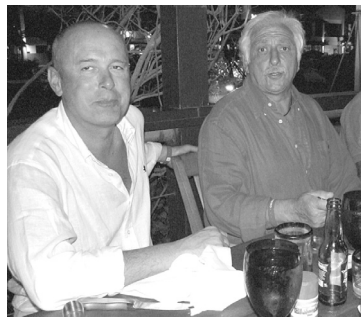


ORANJESTAD - Brian and Pascale Hart (Montreal, Canada) together with Derek, Jeremie and France had the most outstanding dinner on the island last Saturday.

It was their first visit on the island and they were looking for a true French Restaurant where they could enjoy dishes similar to their

home country. They discovered Matilde and instantly fell in love with the extensive choice of menu items that we are offering. “It was our first and not the last time” they said as they were enjoying one our classic “Dover Sole Meuniere” prepared table-side and promised to be back soon! □

Amazonia Churrascaria invaded by Sanitaria Lodigiana



accessories. Hostess Myriam Morzenti, from the head office of Dimensione Turismo in Milan, reports the Italians just love Amazonia Churrascaria and they intend on invading the Brazilian style steakhouse on Palm Beach a number of times over the next few weeks.

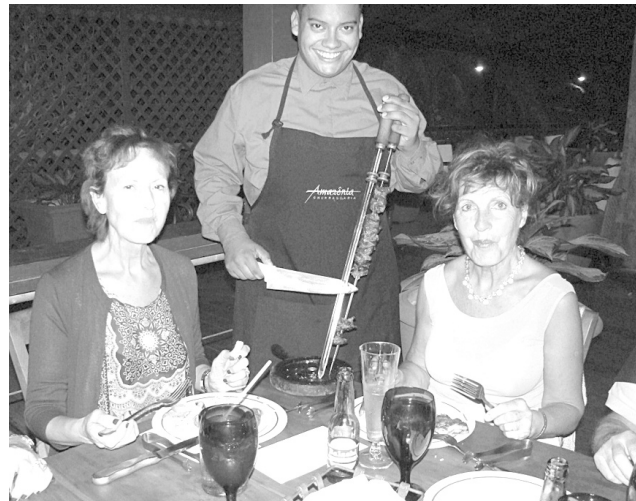


Amazonia Churrascaria helped convert the group of pasta-lovers into meat-lovers as the roaming gauchos did their best to feed and entertain the crowd, in Italian.

The Italians will continue to come to Aruba and to Amazonia Churrascaria all spring as Aruba recently signed an agreement with an Italian tour operator, bringing a charter in every week from Milan, bridging the amazing distance between the boot shaped Apennine Peninsula and the Caribbean paradise.

PALM BEACH -- Dimensione Turismo, helped bring Italian company Sanitaria Lodigiana to Aruba. One hundred and thirty-two

members of the traveling party are all winners of an incentive trip awarded for sales agents moving a large quantity of spa and bathroom





Restaurant



Located in the charming tropical enverions of the Perle d'Or resort, the Pam Pam restaurant offers a peek at Aruba's cunucu (countryside) while still being conveniently located close to all of Aruba's prime resorts. Firts-time patrons will be pleasantly surprised by an appealing a la carte menu that is quite affordably priced.



Pam Pam has the biggest menu with a choice from 26 main-courses, all priced between \$ 13 / \$ 23 (excl. discount).no service charge
 Pam Pam 's house specialty is a unique method of preperation, wich presently at Aruba is found only at their establishment and which they have dubbed their "gourmet meal". A grill and a collection of fresh ingredients for the various dishes ordered are assembled tableside, and patrons prepare the food themselves, controlling their preference of seasonings and garnishes, along with degree of doneness, providin a unique and personal taste treat. It is suggested that reservation for this singular dining experience be made before 3 p.m



*With this coupon you recieve 20% dicount on all main-courses from our menu.
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Driftwood Authentic Aruban Seafood Restaurant offers diners the ultimate dining experience in freshly line caught fish.

ORANJESTAD - Why should seafood enthusiast and other diners alike go to Driftwood Restaurant? Well let's start by mentioning that their fish is caught daily by the owner himself and prepared by a local chef. "Just like mama makes it." The food is fresh, the staff is friendly, and the place is definitely buzzing. If you want to catch your own fresh fish and can't stay for a sit-down dinner, enjoy their Charter Fishing trip and have them prepare it for you. Trust me; it doesn't get any fresher than this: From pier to plate as their motto says.

conscience and add a salad or go all out and try their delicious crab cakes, fish soup, garlic escargots, lobster crepe and coconut shrimps before your hearty entrée.

Driftwood restaurant has a long tradition of serving the best seafood and steaks for over 20 years!



Don't forget to make this a must dine at restaurant while on vacation, you are sure to indulge in some great tasty seafood.



While seafood stars at Driftwood, fish-phobic diners will not go hungry. They have a staggeringly vast menu, which doesn't miss much of anything, from authentic Aruban seafood, lobster, Alaskan king crab legs to chicken, lamb or steaks.

Restaurant information and reservation: open daily (closed on Tuesdays) from 5pm-10:30pm. Tel.583-2515. Located at Klipstraat 12 in the heart of downtown Oranjestad, within driving distance from the resorts.□



Fried fish would be the common choice, but you can get your entrée broiled, grilled or baked. However you can indulge in the more guilty options for lobster, Alaskan king crab legs, grouper, shrimp, Black Angus tenderloin and so forth. Ease your

Q: Why do we serve only fresh line caught fish?
A: How fresh would you be after a net caught fish frozen import from Asia?



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At Papillon Restaurant in The Village

Henri Charrière would have had the time of his life



PALM BEACH - Henri Charrière, one of the world's most famous prisoners, would surely have had the time of his life at Papillon Restaurant in The Village, across from the Radisson Resort. Nicknamed Papillon because of the butterfly tattoo on his chest, the Frenchman was the first convict to escape from Devil's Island, something that nobody had ever done before. Charrière's thrilling, gripping autobiography has been the concept behind Papillon Restaurant. The décor, the decorations and especially the restrooms wink

at the thirteen terrible years Papillon spent in prison in French Guyana.

Papillon Restaurant's menu reflects the Frenchman's arduous journey to freedom: classic French dishes have been dusted with daring Caribbean flair and are a culinary journey for your taste buds. The spacious outside terrace is perfect for casual fine dining; the

iron bars, flecks of rust and stains on the walls make one very glad not to be in Papillon's shoes in the 1940's! Charrière would undoubtedly have loved 'his' place on Aruba: this is luxury living for anyone!

Papillon's opening hours are from 5 pm until midnight. The restaurant's daily specials will be explained by the staff. For reservations, please call 5865400.



Papillon RESTAURANT

Papillon Restaurant forms part of the Taste of Belgium family, which consists of the Chocolaterie in the Renaissance Mall downtown, the Bistro at the Paseo Herencia Mall across from the Holiday Inn Resort and the Taste of Belgium Catering Service, which offers perfect, custom-made solutions for any party, happening, wedding or reception that you may be planning.

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PALM BEACH - The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan.

Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge.

The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers up a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but Texas de Brazil's version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, homemade soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, Texas de Brazil will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

Restaurant open daily

Monday - Sat 6 pm - 11 pm
 Sunday 5 pm - 11 pm

For more information or to make reservations, please call 586-4686. ☐





A woman enters an AIG office building Monday, March 16, 2009 in New York. American International Group Inc. used more than \$90 billion in federal aid to pay out foreign and domestic banks, some of whom had received their own multibillion-dollar U.S. government bailouts.

Associated Press

Obama berates AIG, vows to try to block bonuses

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama called AIG reckless and greedy Monday during a blistering attack in which he pledged to try to block the insurance giant from handing its executives \$165 million in bonuses after taking billions in federal aid.

Obama on Monday joined other officials in criticizing American International Group, the company that has fast become the symbol for the ways in which America's federal bailouts have gone awry.

A public backlash against Washington over the bonuses would make it tougher for Obama to ask Congress for more bailout help — and jeopardize other parts of the recovery agenda that has dominated the early weeks of his presidency.

With that in mind, the president and his top aides were working hard to distance themselves from the insurer's conduct, to contain possible political damage and to try to bolster public confidence in his administration's handling of the broader economic rescue effort.

"How do they justify this outrage to the taxpayers who are keeping the company afloat?" Obama asked. "This isn't just a matter of dollars and cents. It's about our fundamental values."

Bailout steps for AIG totaling over \$170 billion since September have effectively left the federal government with an 80 percent

stake in the faltering insurance giant.

David Axelrod, senior adviser to Obama, said in an interview with The Associated Press that there was no question that the bonuses and the public's anger over them could derail administration efforts to right the economy. "People are angry because they've seen exhibit after exhibit of irresponsibility and people walking away with money in their pockets," he said. "It's undermined the discussion that we have to have."

Obama had scheduled a speech Monday to announce new help for recession-pounded small businesses, but first used the occasion to tear into AIG.

"This is a corporation that finds itself in financial distress due to recklessness and greed," Obama declared.

He said he had directed Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to "pursue every legal avenue to block these bonuses and make the American taxpayer whole."

Later, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the administration would modify the terms of a pending \$30 billion bailout installment for AIG to at least recoup the \$165 million the bonuses represent. That wouldn't rescind the bonuses, just require AIG to account for them differently. Axelrod called the bonuses "spectacularly tone-deaf."

Continued on Page B4

Lynne Cheney treated for fainting in Philadelphia



In this Oct. 17, 2007 file photo, Lynne Cheney, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney, talks about her new book "Blue Skies, No Fences" at the vice president's residence in Washington.

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Lynne Cheney has been treated and released at a Philadelphia hospital after she was taken there because she fainted.

Hahnemann University Hospital spokeswoman Coleen Cannon says former Vice President Dick Cheney's wife is to return to Washington on Tuesday. She was taken to Hahnemann's emergency department after fainting Monday afternoon.

An aide to Dick Cheney says she was in Philadelphia on a private visit with her family.



An Iraqi Army soldier and U.S. Army soldiers from Delta Co., 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment stand guard during a joint patrol in Mosul, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad, Iraq, Friday, March 13, 2009.

Associated Press

U.S. military shoots down Iranian drone

By ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD (AP) — U.S. jets shot down an Iranian unmanned surveillance aircraft last month over Iraqi territory about 60 miles northeast of Baghdad, the U.S. military said Monday.

A U.S. statement said the Ababil 3 was tracked for about 70 minutes before U.S. jets shot it down "well-inside Iraqi airspace" and that the aircraft's presence over Iraq "was not an accident."

An Iraqi official said the Iranian aircraft went down near the Iraqi border town of Mandali. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Continued on Page B6

“Aruhiba” Aruba’s homemade cigar



ORANJESTAD - Benjamin Petrochi has started the newest

export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called ‘Aruhiba’. These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrochi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold cigars from outside, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of “Aruhiba” cigars in Aruba. The process took 5 years Petrochi’s dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and



process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar case is specially designed for the cigars with the logo ‘Aruhiba’ and ‘Made in Aruba’. Petrochi considers ‘Aruhiba’ a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars.

The company sells international cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five cigars and get 1 free for \$35.00. Located at the Historic Dutch



Windmill from 9am to 8pm. Open on Sunday. And also at Tamarijn: open 9am - 5pm and Sunday from 9am to 1pm. The only place to get Aruhiba and all major credit cards accepted. We have homemade and best premium Cuban Cigars. All cigars are legal through costum. Call 586-7833 or 593-6177. Open for tour operators and we have a large parking space. Come and see Mr. Petrochi rolling the cigars everyday.



Flag Day Mega Celebration with lots of prizes!

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Double your prize with powerball B-3 or I-18
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When you cover all 4 corners within 8 calls!

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Letter I.....Awg. 250	Small Kite.....Awg. 600
Letter X.....Awg. 350	Champagne Glass...Awg. 700
(+) Sign.....Awg. 450	Full Card.....Awg. 1800

*Progressive amount unless hit before 03/18/09

\$600 Cash Prize Raffle! • Free Snacks & Live Music!
Earn 50 pts from 10am to 10pm for raffle entries. Raffle starts at 10:30pm



If government gets its way, Ruth Madoff will get nothing

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and TOM HAYS

Associated Press Writers
NEW YORK (AP) —

Prosecutors probing Bernard Madoff's massive fraud are determined to leave his wife with almost nothing after telling a Manhattan court that they consider more than \$100 million in assets, most of it listed in her name, the fruits of her husband's crimes.

The government even included a \$39,000 Steinway piano and \$65,000 in silverware, both owned by Ruth Madoff, in items it said it will try to force the Madoffs to forfeit. The list was in a three-page document filed in U.S. District Court late Sunday.

Brenda Sharton, a lawyer with a Boston firm representing several burned investors, said the government's aggressive approach with Ruth Madoff isn't surprising.

"I don't think it's unusual ... given the magnitude of the fraud," she said. "It would be

unusual if they didn't go after whatever assets they can get." Bernard Madoff, 70, has been living in a small cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in lower Manhattan since he pleaded guilty Thursday to securities fraud, perjury and nine other charges. He could be sent to prison for up to 150 years at a June sentencing.

If prosecutors get their way, the Madoffs will have to give up all their assets, including three properties listed solely in Ruth Madoff's name; a \$7 million Manhattan penthouse bought in 1984, an \$11 million Palm Beach, Florida, home purchased in 1994 and a \$1 million home in Cap d'Antibe, France. Another \$3 million home bought in 1979 in Montauk is jointly owned by the couple.

The government also said Madoff and his wife should forfeit:

— \$10 million in furnishings for all of the homes, along with

accounts in Ruth Madoff's name that hold \$17 million in cash and \$45 million in securities.

— "Bull," a \$7 million yacht in France and its \$1.5 million boat slip, and "Little Bull," a \$320,000 Montauk boat, all in Ruth Madoff's name, as well as a \$2.2 million fishing boat in Palm Beach, Florida, that is in Madoff's name.

— A 1999 Mercedes SLK convertible in Florida, a 2001 Mercedes station wagon and a 2004 Volkswagen, estimated to be worth a total of \$25,000. Not mentioned in the document was \$2.6 million in jewelry, although the government did say it would seek "all insured and readily salable personal property" in any of the Madoff properties. Ruth Madoff has not been charged in the massive swindle. But Karl Buch, a former federal prosecutor now in private practice, said the government filing shows prosecutors believe she knew about the scam.



The back of a home that records show is owned by Bernard Madoff in December 2008 in Palm Beach, Florida. Court documents show that Madoff and his wife Ruth lived a life of high luxury, with exclusive homes, yachts and other assets worth 823 million dollars.

Photo by Joe Raedle

"If the government had strong evidence she was an innocent third party, they wouldn't bring a forfeiture," he said. The assets were first listed in a document made public Friday that listed the couple's combined assets at between \$823 million and \$826 million, most of it the estimated \$700 million value of what is left of

Madoff's businesses. Defense lawyers haven't formally sought to retain any assets, but indicated previously that they might try to keep the Manhattan penthouse and \$62 million in cash and securities for Ruth Madoff because those assets were not part of the fraud and were listed in her name. □

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Pos Chiquito 261-D
This 3 bedroom home is located at Pos Chiquito. The yard is fully fenced and nicely landscaped and measures 532 m² of land. **Lay out:** living room/ dining room with kitchen, hallway, 3 bedrooms of which 2 air conditioned, 1 bathroom covered front porch. *Needs some work!*

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Matadera 3-N
This 2 storey fully furnished condo is nicely located in the Tanki Flip area (Noord). With 3 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms on 116m², you have all the space you need for vacationing/ family living. This fully air conditioned condo has use of all communal areas with swimming pool, laundry room and BBQ pit.

~~US\$ 205.000~~ **US\$ 200.000**



Wayaca Residence 316
Spacious property. This 2 storey house is built on a corner lot of 846 m² of property land. Constructed area 340 m². **Lay out:** Living/ dining room, large kitchen, 4 A/C bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, closets, covered back porch, maids room. Fully fenced and landscaped yard, covered carport.

~~US\$ 338.418~~ **US\$ 324.858**



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Bubali 113-L
This luxurious 3 bedroom Villa is located in the Villa park Bubali and has been designed by one of Aruba's well known Architects. With over 100m² of living room/ entertaining space, facing large covered open plan terraces, swimming pool and gardens. This furnished villa is built on 1173m² of property land. The villa benefits from a state of the art open plan kitchen and entertaining space, integrated double garage and alarm system.

~~US\$ 950.000~~
US\$ 850.000



Rooi Santo 9-E
Great living near the beaches and golf course. This 300 m² villa is fully air conditioned and has 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms large living room, kitchen, dining area, jacuzzi and a brand new swimming pool. A guest house with a separate bathroom and living room.

~~US\$ 520.000~~ **US\$ 490.000**



Malmokweg 22
Beautiful older house. Build up area 350m . Land size 1000 m². **Lay out:** 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, kitchen, huge entertainment room with bar, large office or 5th bedroom, spacious enclosed patio, new oversized pool EXTRA BUILDING: 2 rooms and 2 baths.

~~US\$ 650.000~~ **US\$ 565.00**



San Miquel 48
Unique details, one of a kind, near Eagle Beach! Spacious and luxury property with swimming pool, large 2 bedroom apartment and studio apartment, built on 1102 m² of land. Main house: 2 bedrooms and 2 bathroom. Beautiful tropical garden. Fully furnished!

~~US\$ 650.000~~ **US\$ 600.000**



In this Oct. 15, 2008 file photo, New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo listens to a question at a news conference on Wall Street Wednesday in New York. Cuomo has subpoenaed Bank of America Corp. Chief Executive Ken Lewis as part of an investigation into whether the bank misled investors about losses and executive bonuses at Merrill Lynch & Co, The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009.

AIG
Continued from Page B1

He said the administration hoped the tough talk would result in voluntary action on the part of AIG and its bonus recipients, although that remains an open question. "All we can do is administer this thing going forward," he said.

In a letter to Geithner over the weekend, the government-appointed chief executive of AIG, Edward Liddy, said the bonuses were legally binding obligations and the firm's "hands are tied."

On a separate track, New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo said Monday he would issue subpoenas for information on the bonuses after AIG missed his deadline for providing details. Cuomo said his office

Associated Press would investigate whether the employees were involved in AIG's near-collapse and whether the \$165 million in bonus payments were fraudulent under state law. AIG spokeswoman Christina Pretto told The Associated Press, "We are in contact with the attorney general and will of course respond to his request."

Obama's comments came on the same day a new poll showed slippage in his approval rating. The poll by the Pew Research Center showed it dropped from 64 percent in February to 59 percent this month amid differing opinions over his economic proposals and what the pollsters said was a growing perception that the president is listening more to his party's liberals than to its moderates.

Still, those surveyed generally gave the president favorable marks for doing as much as he can to try to fix the economy, and few blame him for making the economy worse.

Andrew Kohut, Pew's director, said in an interview that people are most angry with banks and companies but there's also "pushback against Washington generally. And, of course, the buck stops with Barack Obama these days." Obama's sharp words continued an insistent administration drumbeat over the past few days designed to pressure the bonus recipients to forgo them. Pressure was building on that issue — and on the government to rework its AIG bailout to make sure the company repays as much of the \$170 billion as possible.

So far, the company has been honoring its contracts with U.S. and foreign banks, paying out more than \$90 billion in economic bailout funds to big banks and others. The government agreed to uphold those contracts when it seized control of AIG in September, contending that failure would bring even worse global economic problems.

However, Obama officials made the rounds of Sunday talk shows to denounce the insurer. And even Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke weighed in, saying on CBS' "60 Minutes" that the AIG bailout angered him the most and that he "slammed the phone more than a few times on discussing AIG." □

Judge criticizes Senate confirmation process

By NEDRA PICKLER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The chief judge of the U.S. District Court in Washington on Monday said senators are "injuring the federal judiciary" by holding up nominations and making a political issue out of the clients represented by lawyers up for federal positions.

U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth said he and his judicial colleagues were "virtually unanimous in our revulsion and disgust" that debate over recent Justice Department nominees centered on the clients they have represented.

"The process has gone seriously awry when we go down that path," Lamberth said during a speech before his fellow federal judges and Attorney General Eric Holder.

"The process for picking federal judges is totally broken and it badly needs to be fixed," Lamberth said. He said both political parties are to blame for the unfilled seats across the country.

"The pay-backs and the bickering have been thoroughly bipartisan," Lamberth said. "I say to both Republicans and Democrats: You are injuring our federal judiciary."

Lamberth was a Republican appointee, nominated in 1987 by President Ronald

Reagan, but he criticized GOP opposition to President Barack Obama's No. 2 and 3 positions at the Justice Department. The Senate overcame those objections to confirm the nominations of David Ogden for deputy attorney general and Thomas Perelli for associate attorney general.

Twenty-six Republicans and one Democrat opposed Ogden, who was criticized for representing defendants in pornography cases. Twenty Republicans voted against Perelli, a former Lamberth clerk who represented Terri Schiavo's husband in his fight to take his severely brain damaged wife off life support. Schiavo's case was a major issue for conservatives who argued she should be kept alive even in a vegetative state.

Lamberth said his own nomination was held up for a six-month partisan fight, but that pales in comparison to the more recent nominations that have routinely been delayed for several years.

Lamberth argued that the Senate confirmation process had grown so demeaning that at least one judicial nominee he knows asked the president not to be nominated a second time. He said the process threatens to drive away the best and brightest from accepting positions on the federal bench. He said he disagrees with Obama's opposition when he was a senator to President George W. Bush's Supreme Court nominations and candidate Obama's stated criteria for judicial nominees. But he said it's time for both parties in Congress to come together with Obama and agree to "stop this war" over judicial nominees.

Lamberth was speaking at the federal courthouse's Ceremonial Courtroom for the first annual Judge Thomas A. Flannery Lecture Series, named after the late judge and former U.S. attorney who served 30 years at the federal courthouse and died a year and a half ago. □

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Texas jail was ruled by inmates, authorities say

By ANGELA K. BROWN
Associated Press Writer
MONTAGUE, Texas (AP) — Inmates at a small town Texas jail had the run of the place, having sex with their jailer girlfriends, bringing in recliners, taking drugs and chatting on cell phones supplied by friends or guards, authorities say.

The jailhouse escapades — some of which date to 2006, according to authorities — have rocked Montague, a farming and ranching town of several hundred people in the northern part of the state near the border with Oklahoma.

Inmates disabled some of the surveillance cameras and made weapons out of nails. The doors to two groups of cells didn't lock, but apparently no one tried to escape — perhaps because they had everything they needed inside.

There were whispers in the past year about an affair between a female jailer and male inmate, but people dismissed the rumors as small-town gossip. It was not until late last month, when a Texas grand jury returned a 106-count indictment against the former sheriff and 16 others, that the inmates-gone-wild scandal broke wide open.

The indictment charged Bill Keating, sheriff from 2004 until December, with official oppression and having sex with female inmates. The others indicted include nine guards — seven women and two men — who were charged with various offenses involving sex or drugs and other contraband. Four inmates also were charged.

Local, state and federal authorities are still trying to figure out how this small-town Texas jail was turned into something like a party house.

The new sheriff, Paul Cunningham, said he was stunned while touring the jail for the first time just hours after being sworn into office Jan. 1. He saw partitions made of paper towels that blocked jailers' view into cells, and scattered pills.

Cunningham, who had not worked for the county before

his election in November, immediately ordered the jail closed and moved the nearly 60 inmates to another institution.

"It literally scared me — not for myself but for the employees," Cunningham said. "How somebody kept from being killed was beyond me."

Cunningham, who defeated Keating in the Republican primary last spring, suggested that Keating lost interest in the jail after that and turned his back on the place.

Separately from the indictment, Keating, 62, faces up to 10 years in federal prison after pleading guilty in January to charges he coerced a woman into having sex with him by threatening to jail her on drug charges.

Keating's attorney, Mark Daniel, called the latest charges against the former sheriff "kind of silly in the face of the federal investigation, like piling on." He declined further comment.

The investigation began with a tip last fall from inside the

jail.

An official received a handwritten letter on notebook paper from an inmate arrested on charges of kidnapping his girlfriend. The inmate, Luke C. Bolton, said they met in 2007 when she was a jail guard and he was behind bars on another charge. He said their sexual relationship started in a jail shower and continued during her late-night visits to his cell.

"I'm just reaching out for help to show (the jailer) is a person who abused her power. She broke the law by having sex with me in cell #16 while I was an inmate. ... Please help me. I am telling the truth. Everybody knows I am," Bolton wrote, offering to take a polygraph.

The former jailer is among those indicted. Bolton remains in jail.

Current employees said they were shocked by the scandal. "People say, 'How could you not know?'" Well, it didn't go on during our shift," said Jerrie Reed, who works the day shift. Reed said the then-



This undated handout photo provided by the Montague County Sheriff shows a trustee holding area of the Montague County jail in Montague, Texas, before it was refurbished. Sheriff Paul Cunningham said he was stunned while touring the jail for the first time just hours after being sworn into office Jan. 1, 2009.

Associated Press

sheriff sometimes asked to see female inmates privately in his office, but she assumed they were informants. She said none ever seemed upset as she led them shackled to and from Keating's office.

Cunningham said it appears that most of the illegal activities occurred in a certain section of the 100-bed, one-story jail, which has several

long corridors that make it difficult for anyone to hear what is going on beyond their immediate areas.

The jail will reopen this week following about \$1 million in repairs, needed after years of damage by inmates, Cunningham said. Also, the entire department is getting new uniforms, badges and vehicles. □

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Former Iranian President and presidential candidate Mohammad Khatami, Iran's most prominent reformist, has decided to pull out of the race against the country's hard-line president to avoid splitting the pro-reform vote in upcoming elections, a senior adviser said Monday, March 16, 2009.

IRANIAN DRONE
Continued from Page B1

The Ababil is believed to have a maximum range of about 90 miles and can fly up to 14,000 feet. It is primarily designed for surveillance and intelligence-gathering.

U.S. officials have frequently accused the Iranians of supplying weapons, training and money to Shiite extremist groups opposed to the U.S. military presence and to the U.S.-backed Iraqi government.

Iran has denied links to militant groups inside Iraq and says the instability in this country is a result of the U.S. "occupation." The Iranians consider the presence of about 140,000 U.S. troops in a neighboring country as a threat to their national security.

In Baghdad, a U.S. soldier was fatally injured during combat operations Monday, the U.S. said in a statement. No further details were released.

It was the first combat death reported by the U.S. military in Baghdad this month and the first among U.S. forces nationwide since March 7, when a soldier was killed in the Tikrit area.

U.S. casualties have dropped sharply since Iraqi soldiers and police have taken a greater role in security. President Barack Obama has pledged to withdraw all U.S. combat troops from Iraq by

September 2010. American combat troops are due to leave bases in Baghdad and other cities by June 30 under an agreement that provides for all U.S. forces to leave the country by the end of 2011.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki told The Associated Press on Sunday that U.S. troops may stay in some areas that are not completely secure even after the June 30 date.

He did not identify those areas, but U.S. and Iraqi troops are still trying to secure Mosul, the country's third-largest city where al-Qaida and other Sunni militant groups remain active. Also Monday, an Iranian opposition group said Iraqi troops tightened their siege of a camp north of Baghdad where about 3,500 of their members have been based for about 20 years.

The People's Mujahedeen said Iraqi troops have prevented food and fuel from reaching Camp Ashraf for the past six days — despite written guarantees by the Iraqi government that it would guarantee human rights of the residents.

But Iraqi national security adviser Mouwaffak al-Rubaie branded the People's Mujahedeen allegations as "totally baseless." He said People's Mujahedeen members had taken over a building belonging to the Iraqi army and were preventing soldiers from entering it.

"They have a huge propaganda machine all over the world and are known to exaggerate things," added al-Rubaie, whom the People's Mujahedeen said was behind the alleged crackdown.

Iran and the United States

consider the People's Mujahedeen a terrorist group and Tehran has stepped up pressure on the Iraqis to close the camp. Iraq took over security for the camp from the U.S. on Jan. 1.

But the Iraqi government promised the U.S. that it would not force the group's members to leave against their will.

The People's Mujahedeen opposed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi during the 1979 revolution but fell out with the clerical regime that replaced him. Saddam Hussein allowed the group to set up a camp during the Iran-Iraq war for staging raids across the border inside Iran.

U.S. troops disarmed the fighters and confined them to Camp Ashraf after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam. Meanwhile, residents of the Kurdish town of Halabja marked the 21st anniversary of the March 16-17 poison gas attack by Saddam's forces against Kurdish separatists.

The 1988 attack killed thousands of people and was the biggest use of chemical weapons against a civilian populated area in history.

Local officials and victims' relatives placed wreaths on a monument to the dead.

"The anniversary has become etched in the memory of many people," said Aras Abbadi, who lost 21 relatives in the attack. "Every year, we wait for the anniversary and condemn that deplorable attack committed by a dictatorial regime against its own people."

Another participant, Mariam Saleh, 59, pointed to a photograph on display that shows a truck full of victims.

"My family was in that truck," she wept. □

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PG	THE PINK PANTHER 2	daily: 4:05 matinee: 12:00	6:20 2:05	8:20 late show: 12:25	
R	THE INTERNATIONAL	daily: 4:55 matinee: 12:05	7:20 2:30	9:50 late show: 12:20	
PG	HOTEL FOR DOGS	daily: 4:40 matinee: 12:20	2:25	late show:	
PG	PAUL BLART: MALL COP	daily: 4:15 matinee: 12:10	6:20 2:15	8:20 late show: 12:15	
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R	WATCHMEN	daily: 4:40 matinee: 1:15	8:00	late show: 11:10	NEW
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PG	PAUL BLART: MALL COP	daily: 4:15 matinee: 12:10	6:10 2:15	8:10 late show: 12:25	
PG	THE PINK PANTHER 2	daily: 3:40 matinee: 1:40	5:50	7:50 late show: 12:00	
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Salvadoran leftist president promises moderation

By ALEXANDRA OLSON
Associated Press Writer

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP)—A charismatic former TV journalist promised to build strong ties with President Barack Obama and promote investor confidence Monday as he took El Salvador into uncharted territory by being elected its first leftist president.

Behind Mauricio Funes is a party of former Marxist guerrillas that fought to overthrow U.S.-backed governments in the 1980s and whose rise to power has raised fears of a communist regime in the war-scarred Central American country.

Funes, who gave up journalism less than two years ago to become the presidential candidate of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, or FMLN, sought to quell those concerns after his historic victory Sunday.

“Nothing traumatizing is going to happen here,” he said in an interview with local Megavision television. “We will not reverse any privatizations. We will not jeopardize private property. There is no reason at this moment for fear.”

The FMLN, formed from five rebel armies in 1980, is the second former enemy of the United States to take power democratically in Latin America’s lurch to the left. In 2006, Nicaraguans elected Daniel Ortega, two decades after his Sandinista government fought U.S.-backed Contra rebels, and his relations with Washington have remained tense under the Obama administration.

Among the 75,000 people killed in El Salvador’s 12-year civil war were a U.S. Navy lieutenant commander gunned down by guerrillas and four Marines who died in a rebel attack on a restaurant. Ex-guerrillas will almost certainly form part of the Funes government, including Vice President-elect Salvador Sanchez Ceren, a rebel-commander-turned-congressman.

The outgoing government party, too, is stained by memories of the war. It was founded by right-wing death-squad boss Roberto d’Aubuisson. His victims included the assassinated Roman Catholic

Archbishop Oscar Romero, according to a U.N. investigation.

Funes, who was a TV reporter during the war, has stayed away from the firebrand anti-U.S. rhetoric that characterizes Ortega and Venezuela’s leftist President Hugo Chavez. Instead, he has compared his message of change to Obama’s.

Funes, who takes office June 1, promised in his victory speech that strengthening ties with the United States would be a priority. The Obama administration congratulated him Monday.

“We look forward to working with the new government of El Salvador,” said State Department spokesman Robert Wood. “It was a very free, fair and democratic election.”

The overture was a marked departure from the administration of former President George W. Bush, which suggested during the 2004 election that it could not trust an FMLN government.

The United States’ current neutrality has deflated one of the major arguments of the conservative Arena party as it sought a fifth five-year term in power. Arena flooded the airwaves with ads showing Chavez railing against Obama and warning that Funes would turn El Salvador into a Venezuelan satellite.

Chavez’s government congratulated Funes on his triumph Monday and said Salvadorans “showed their clarity and courage, defeating the campaign of lies, garbage and manipulation.”

While the FMLN has long-standing ties to Chavez, Funes kept the Venezuelan president at a distance during the campaign. Last week, Funes told foreign reporters he admired Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva for gaining the trust of the business class despite misgivings when the leftist first took office in 2003.

Critics who once questioned the sincerity of such messages gave Funes the benefit of the doubt Monday.

“Let Lula, and not Chavez, influence the direction of this country,” wrote Fabricio Altamirano, executive director of El Diario de Hoy, whose pro-government leanings so angered Funes during the campaign that



Mauricio Funes, presidential candidate for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front party (FMLN), waves to supporters as his wife Vanda Pignato stands next to him as he gives his victory speech after winning the presidential election in San Salvador, Sunday, March 15, 2009.

Associated Press

he refused to grant the newspaper interviews. “The president-elect has said it a million times and the whole country is waiting to see if he keeps his word.” In another conciliatory gesture, President Tony Saca — himself a former television sportscaster — said he will formally introduce Funes as El Salvador’s future president at an April Summit of the Americas in Trinidad, which Obama will attend.

Funes needs the peaceful transition to last. He will be the untested leader of a country that has known only right-wing governments — all dictatorships until the mid-1980s — since its 1821 independence from Spain. □

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dinning room or outside on the terrace to enjoy the tropical breeze and daily live music. Most guests come in early for the daily fresh catches, such as Red snapper, grouper, mahi mahi, wahoo and tuna. Check with the server to find out about the Catch of the day. The chef will be more than happy to prepare your fish the way you like it best: grilled, deep-fried, pan-fried or the chef's choice. Every Wednesday, seafood specials are prepared depending on what the Fishermen bring in fresh out of the water that afternoon. These



specials usually include fresh Caribbean lobster and pounds of peeled shrimps. Fishes and More is for everyone, from large groups, families, couples and even singles who can't shake the seafood addiction can stop in for a fix of Pina Colada Shrimp. For those who like to try something different or have had their fill of spectacular seafood, the chef prepares a wonderful array of filet mignon, rib eye, wienerschnitzel, veal parmesan, and pasta specialties. Great Seafood!!! Fun and relaxed atmosphere. Right across from the high rise hotels. It is worth the short walk to a wonderful dinner ☐



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SPORTS

Aruba TODAY



Tiger Woods warms up on the driving range before play in the annual Tavistock Cup golf tournament in Orlando, Fla. on Monday, March 16, 2009. The Tavistock Cup is between two high-profile golf clubs in Orlando where several prominent PGA Tour players are members.

Associated Press

Isleworth takes 6-4 lead on Lake Nona

ORLANDO, Florida (AP) — Tiger Woods finally made some meaningful putts, even if they were for par, as he teamed with John Cook to win a fourballs match Monday in leading Isleworth to a 6-4 lead over Lake Nona in the Tavistock Cup.

Woods and Cook had a 9-under 63 to defeat Henrik Stenson and Chris DiMarco in the opening match. Isleworth captain Mark O'Meara and Darren Clarke followed with a 62 for a two-stroke victory over Mark McNulty and Ben Curtis.

"I made some nice par putts today," Woods said. "Keep working on it."

The Tavistock Cup is between two high-profile golf clubs in Orlando where several prominent PGA Tour players are members. The opening round was fourballs, in which two points were awarded for the lowest score.

Lake Nona won two matches with the best two scores of the day. □

Rodriguez, Astros closing in on deal

By KRISTIE RIEKEN

AP Sports Writer

KISSIMMEE, Florida (AP) — The Houston Astros and catcher Ivan Rodriguez are closing in on a \$1.5 million, one-year contract, a person familiar with the talks told The Associated Press on Monday. The deal would contain \$1.5 million in performance bonuses based on games and plate appearances, the person said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the agreement had not yet been announced by the team.

"There isn't anything certain yet. Right now the only team I have is Puerto Rico," said Rodriguez in Spanish in Miami before meeting Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic. "There's interest, but I haven't received a call yet. Let's wait and see what happens in the coming hours or days."

Houston needed a veteran catcher to replace Brad



This is a March 14, 2009, file photo showing Puerto Rico's catcher Ivan Rodriguez waiting to hit during batting practice before a game against the USA during the second round of the World Baseball Classic game in Miami. The Houston Astros and catcher Ivan Rodriguez are closing in on a \$1.5 million, one-year contract, a person familiar with the talks told The Associated Press.

Associated Press

Ausmus, who became a free agent and signed with the Los Angeles Dodgers. The Astros have several young catchers in camp who need time to develop. Houston used Ausmus, J.R. Towles and Humberto Quintero at the

position last season.

It appeared earlier that Quintero would be the starter this season, but he'll likely move to a backup role.

Rodriguez's talks with Houston were first reported by espn.com.

"It's very important for me (to be a starter) because I feel good enough to play every day," Rodriguez said. "I feel very good, ready to play a whole season."

He added that his splay with Puerto Rico probably boosted his bid to find a regular-season team.

"It helps a lot for some players like myself, who still don't have a job. I think this Classic has been a very important factor."

Florida also had inquired. Rodriguez helped the Marlins win the 2003 World Series.

"There was some interest and we'll leave it at that," Marlins vice president of baseball operations Larry Beinfest said. "Obviously, we have a lot of affection for Pudge and what he did in '03. There was interest there, and he made another choice, and that's the way it goes. Hopefully, it works out for him." □

New NFLPA boss eager to open labor talks

By JOHN WAWROW

AP Sports Writer

BUFFALO, New York (AP) — DeMaurice Smith wasted no time as the new NFL Players Association executive director, spending his first day on the job getting a start on labor talks with NFL commissioner Roger Goodell and uniting the union ranks following a divisive seven-month search.

On Monday, less than 24 hours after he was elected, Smith had a brief phone conversation with Goodell and started putting together a transition team to assume the reins of North America's most powerful sports union as it approaches a critical juncture. Smith, speaking on a telephone conference call with reporters, said it was his intention to use his initial conversation with Goodell as "our first conversation of the collective bargaining agreement."

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello confirmed that Smith and Goodell had a brief conversation. Though he didn't offer details, Aiello said in an e-mail to The Associated Press that "the commissioner congratulated him and said he looked forward to working with him."

The 45-year-old Smith, a Washington, D.C.-based attorney, succeeds the late Gene Upshaw as union boss following an election by the league's 32 player representatives in Hawaii on Sunday night. He was hired to a three-year term.

Before returning home, Smith also planned to meet with the three other candidates that were up for the job, including former



This Feb. 1, 2007, file photo shows NFL union chief Gene Upshaw answering questions during a news conference at the Miami Beach Convention Center in Miami Beach, Fla. They spent last season wearing the initials "GU" on their uniforms to honor Gene Upshaw's legacy and the NFL Players Association's past. This weekend, NFL players will begin looking forward to determine who will replace Upshaw as their next leader.

Associated Press

NFLPA president Troy Vincent, whom he hoped would play a role in his administration. Vincent was open to the discussions, and backed Smith as the union's new chief.

"We can move forward as one body toward the future with the new leadership of DeMaurice Smith," Vincent said. "I'm personally looking forward, as a retired player, to work with the new executive director and help him move the organization forward." □

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Brodeur will go for 552 against Chicago on Tuesday

By TOM CANAVAN

AP Sports Writer

NEWARK, New Jersey AP) — Martin Brodeur is looking beyond passing Patrick Roy as the NHL's all-time leader in wins by a goaltender.

The New Jersey Devils goaltender wants to win enough games to make his mark almost untouchable for those youngsters who today are skating on ponds and in arenas with their dads and junior teams.

Brodeur, who tied Roy's career mark in a storybook setting in his hometown of Montreal this weekend, will get a chance to win his 552nd game on Tuesday when the Devils play host to the Chicago

Blackhawks.

"I will just put myself in a class of my own, for now," Brodeur said Monday when asked about breaking the mark. "When people look at stats now, there are two names at 551. There will be one name at 552 when I get there. After that, it's 553 and I will just try to raise the bar as high as I can."

Brodeur doesn't have a particular number in mind. After breaking the mark, he said the next big number would be 600, but obviously that is not his goal.

The 36-year-old is under contract for another three seasons and he intends on fulfilling that commitment.

Until tearing a biceps in his left elbow in November and missing almost four months while undergoing post-surgical rehabilitation, Brodeur had won at least 37 games a season since 1996-97, not counting the lockout year.

If the four-time Vezina Trophy winner did that over the final three years of his contract, he would have about 675 wins when his contract runs out.

Brodeur said that he was able to catch Roy a little earlier because there are no more ties in NHL games, and that could help some youngster catch him.

"Guys will have to play a lot," Brodeur said. "Depending on whether goalies can have that work load and organizations will leave goalies alone for 15 years and say: 'You go on the ice whenever you want.' They might have a chance to be close to it."

Brodeur believes that all-time wins is the most meaningful record for goaltenders.

"It's all about winning," he said. "I'll say it again, it's not just about the goaltender, it's about the team. The team, in 15 years, we've won that many games and more with other guys chipping in along the way. It's a lot of wins."

The Devils took Sunday off, and Brodeur rested, saying the pressure of tying the record in Montreal drained him more than he expected. He said he really appreciated the standing ovation Canadiens' fans gave him after the game, noting his father, who worked for Montreal as a team photographer, was really emotional after the contest.



New Jersey Devils goaltender Martin Brodeur, right, shakes hands with Patrick Roy following his victory over the Montreal Canadiens in NHL hockey action Saturday, March 14, 2009 in Montreal. With the win, Brodeur ties Roy's record of 551 victories.

Associated Press

"I am definitely looking forward to doing other things, but you sit back and take it all in," Brodeur said. "You have to appreciate what you have just accomplished or what you are about to accomplish. That's part of doing some great things, being able to live it. You don't want to regret it, and say, 'I should have enjoyed it a little more that moment.' I am enjoying every second of it."

Brodeur would like nothing better than to surpass Roy's record in New Jersey. He has hit most of the personal milestones in his 15-year career on the road. "There is that sense of pride being on one team and making the commitment to people in the organization and fans, that you want to stay here and love where you are at," Brodeur said. "For me, it was never a secret about that, I love being in New Jersey and being a part of this. The success of the organization is my success at the same time." □

Federer, Murray advance at Indian Wells

By KEN PETERS

AP Sports Writer

INDIAN WELLS, California (AP) — Roger Federer and Andy Murray each took a step closer to a possible semifinal showdown with relatively routine third-round victories Monday at the BNP Paribas Open.

Federer, a three-time Indian Wells winner ranked No. 2, downed Ivo Karlovic 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Playing his first event since withdrawing from the Dubai tournament and the first round of Davis Cup because of back problems, Federer came up with big shots when needed against Karlovic.

Down 3-1 in the tiebreaker, the Swiss star evened it with points on a volley past Karlovic, then a low, hard forehand that the Croatian couldn't handle. Karlovic, ranked No. 28, then made a series of unforced errors, including hitting a forehand long for the final point of the tiebreaker.

Federer, who had said he was rusty coming into Indian Wells,

looked considerably sharper in the second set, reeling off the hard, accurate groundstrokes that made him the world's top player for so long.

The 21-year-old Murray, a Scot ranked No. 4 and off to a 17-1 start this season, overpowered Paul-Henri Mathieu 6-3, 6-2. Murray served six aces, won 21 of 25 first-serve points and jumped on his French opponent's second serve to take 17 of 24 points.

No. 17 Fernando Gonzalez of Chile made quick work of James Blake, needing only an hour and five minutes to beat the American 7-5, 6-1. No. 13 Blake made 35 unforced errors, 11 more than Gonzalez. □

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United States' Jimmy Rollins (1) is congratulated by Derek Jeter (2) and teammates after hitting a two-run homerun against Netherlands' Rick VandenHurk in the second inning during the second round of the World Baseball Classic in Miami, Sunday, March 15, 2009. Curtis Granderson scored on the homerun.
Associated Press

U.S. beats Netherlands 9-3 in WBC

By STEVEN WINE
AP Sports Writer

MIAMI (AP) — The United States avoided elimination from the World Baseball Classic, beating the Netherlands 9-3 on Sunday to ease the sting of a big loss to Puerto Rico the night before. Jimmy Rollins drove in four runs with a homer, triple and sacrifice fly, and newcomer Brian Roberts went 3-for-3 with two walks, two runs and two RBIs. Roy Oswalt pitched four scoreless innings, then six relievers completed a 12-hitter. Even with a six-run lead in the eighth, the Americans remained feisty. Matt Lindstrom gave up a leadoff homer to Bryan Engelhardt, who took a long look at his prodigious drive before jogging around the bases. When Lindstrom's next pitch sailed behind Vince Rooi, Dutch players took several steps onto the field as they yelled angrily at the pitcher. Lindstrom retired Rooi, faced three more batters and left the game with a stiff pitching shoulder. He was scheduled for an MRI exam Monday. Left fielder Ryan Braun departed in the ninth with a sore left side. Few fans were on hand to witness the Americans' turnaround, with a crowd of 11,059 at the game. Still one loss from elimination, the United States will play Tuesday night against the loser of Monday night's game between Puerto Rico and Venezuela. Left-hander Ted Lilly is slated to pitch for the Americans. If they win, they'll advance to the semifinals next weekend in Los Angeles. The Dutch were eliminated. Despite a roster sprinkled with minor league prospects, they became the surprise team of the tournament when they beat the Dominican Republic twice in the opening round. The Americans bounced back from a loss Saturday that triggered the mercy rule when they fell 10 runs behind, ending their game against Puerto Rico in the seventh inning. The rout left Team USA with an ERA of 7.22, but Oswalt and the bullpen shut down the Netherlands. Oswalt (1-0) left with a 6-0 lead. He allowed five hits but struck out five and escaped a bases-loaded jam in the third. LaTroy Hawkins, Scot Shields and Jonathan Broxton each pitched one scoreless inning. Adam Dunn hit his third homer of the tournament, and Roberts sparked the offense only hours after joining the team as a replacement for second baseman Dustin Pedroia, sidelined by an abdominal injury. The injury-plagued Americans also lost Chipper Jones for the rest of the tournament. He was scratched from the designated hitter spot before the game after he aggravated a strain in his right side. □

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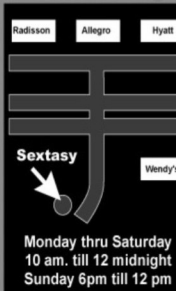
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Presidente electo salvadoreño Funes quiere gobernar cerca Brasil y EEUU



El presidente electo de El Salvador, Mauricio Funes, celebra su victoria en las elecciones presidencial en San Salvador, 15 mar 2009. REUTERS/Edgard Garrido

SAN SALVADOR (Reuters) - Lejos de las épocas de confrontación de la Guerra Fría, la ex guerrilla que ganó las elecciones del domingo en El Salvador quiere gobernar cerca de Estados Unidos, donde viven millones de emigrantes que son el sustento del país, dijo el presidente electo, Mauricio Funes. En una entrevista con Reuters, Funes dijo además que quiere inspirarse en el presidente de Brasil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, como ejemplo de cómo manejar la crisis global que está pegando a El Salvador debido a una caída en las vitales remesas familiares. “Yo aspiraría a estrechar la relaciones con el presidente (estadounidense Barack

Obama para garantizar la estabilidad migratoria de los casi dos millones y medio de salvadoreños que viven y trabajan en los Estados Unidos”, dijo Funes momentos después de ganar los comicios. El lunes, el Departamento de Estado de Estados Unidos saludó la victoria de Funes y dijo que Obama está dispuesto a trabajar con él. Funes, un reconocido periodista, ganó con un 51,27 por ciento de los votos las cuartas elecciones en El Salvador después de la guerra civil que aquejó al país durante 12 años hasta 1992 y llevó así a la ex guerrilla Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)

por primera vez al poder. Con su triunfo, acabó con 20 años de gobiernos de la derechista Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (Arena), un fuerte aliado de Estados Unidos que incluso llegó a enviar tropas para apoyar la ocupación de Irak. Observadores ven en el triunfo del FMLN un avance de la izquierda en América Latina que lidera el presidente venezolano Hugo Chávez, quien mantiene permanentes enfrentamientos con Washington. Pero, Funes parece estar decidido a evitar la confrontación. El FMLN, una de las guerrillas más fuertes de América Latina durante la Guerra Fría, combatió a fuerzas de seguridad que estaban armadas y respaldadas por Estados Unidos. La guerra dejó un tendal de 75.000 muertos. Chávez dijo, citado en un comunicado de la cancillería de su país, que la victoria de la izquierda con Funes “consolida la corriente histórica que, en esta primera década del siglo XXI, se ha levantado en toda América Latina y el Caribe”.

ADMIRADOR DE LULA
Funes dijo que admira al Gobierno de Lula -uno de los primeros presidentes en felicitarlo por su triunfo- sobre todo por mantener la estabilidad macroeconómica del país en medio de la crisis y por sus programas para combatir la pobreza, que en El Salvador afecta a más de la mitad de la población. “Yo veo con especial atención construir relaciones más estrechas con el Gobierno del presidente Lula”, dijo Funes, quien nunca tuvo vínculos

con la guerrilla antes de ser candidato y en sus programas de entrevistas era un fuerte crítico de Arena y denunciaba casos de corrupción. “Si hay un líder a nivel latinoamericano al que he admirado y sobre todo al que he visto con especial atención sus programas económicos para mantener la estabilidad macroeconómica de Brasil” es Lula, agregó. La esposa de Funes, Vanda Pignato, era hasta hace poco representante del Partido de los Trabajadores (PT) de Lula en El Salvador. El presidente electo dijo que se propone gobernar a través de un pacto social para enfrentar

el impacto de la crisis, pero deberá lidiar con una derecha en la oposición a la que el FMLN considera la heredera de sus enemigos durante la guerra. Además, Funes, que relevará el 1 de junio a Elías Antonio Saca, gobernará con un Congreso donde el FMLN quedó con una mayoría relativa tras las elecciones legislativas de enero. La ex guerrilla tendrá 35 de las 84 bancas en la nueva Asamblea Legislativa que asume el 1 de mayo, mientras que Arena contará con 32 asientos y el resto se diluirá en dos partidos pequeños asociados a la alianza derechista. □



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